

Give Back to Impact: (Re)considering the Motivation for Latinx College Student Organization Involvement and Leadership

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Abstract: A follow-up study to the author’s original 2017 study on the impact of Latinx student involvement was performed to understand reasons for Latinx community, civic, and artistic involvement. In the original investigation, Latinx college student organization members were interviewed to reflect on the impact of their college involvement 20 years after college graduation. Latinx college student organizations were described as providing skills for personal, career and educational advancement, as well as motivation for community advocacy. This follow up study provides findings using participants from the original to explain reasons for community involvement and how Latinx college student organizations instilled motivation for such activity. Recommendations are provided for further investigations on these groups and their long-term effects.

Keywords: *Latinx college students, Latinx college student organizations, ethnic student organizations, student involvement, college experiences, extracurricular outcomes*

Introduction

Since the early 1900’s, defining leadership has been a challenging task influenced by shifting societal norms, shared values, and cultural attitudes (Northouse, 2018). While attempts to define leadership has no universal consensus (Northouse, 2018), the large body of literature examining leadership behaviors and processes provides scholars and practitioners knowledge on the many facets that comprise the concept. Juana Bordas (2012), for example, offers a multicultural lens to view leadership using “the influences, practices, and values of diverse cultures in a respectful and productive manner” (p. 8). Her multicultural definition of leadership emphasizes the “vibrant flavors and gifts” African American, American Indian, and Latinx communities provide to organizations reflecting “the vitality, values, and voices of our diversity” within the nation and globally (p. 9). Such ideas espoused in multicultural leadership are found in the goals and activities of ethnic college student organizations.

Research on ethnic college student organizations has increased over the past thirty years (Montelongo et al., 2015; Bowman, Park, & Denson, 2014; Delgado-Romero, Hernandez, & Montero, 2004; Hernandez, 2002) and these groups continue to diversify in their presence on college campuses. Outcomes provided to members of these groups are of interest to education practitioners and scholars seeking to enhance student success and leadership development. Community advocacy and civic engagement are also considered key features of ethnic college

student organizations (Montelongo, 2003; Bowman, Park, & Denson, 2014; Davis, 1997). Despite this awareness, studies are needed to understand how advocacy and engagement impact leadership and identity development, especially once students enter society as college graduates. Latinx college student organizations have provided leadership opportunities for college students since their earliest presence on U.S. colleges and universities (Fajardo, 2015). Understanding how these college organizations promote multicultural leadership for former members provides a primary focus for this research study.

This study is a follow up to the author's first investigation on Latinx college student organization (LCSO) involvement effects on members 20 years after college graduation (Montelongo, 2017). In the original study, the author interviewed former members of a large umbrella-type LCSO who were involved between the years 1988-1992 at a 4-year public flagship university in Texas. Interviews described how the LCSO impacted career and education success. Former members shared various reflections on their college involvement and what they gained from being involved in a college organization specific to their cultural and ethnicity. From these reflections and narratives, four impact themes emerged – Responsibility; Confidence; *La Familia*; and Cultural Advocacy. The four impact themes described how LCSO's "planted seeds for future community activism, career and educational advancement, supportive networks, and cultural pride" (Montelongo, 2017, Discussion section, para.1). These impact themes were described as the long-term impacts of involvement of Latinx college student organizations. From the collected interviews, the author noticed additional pursuits made by these former LCSO members beyond their career and educational achievements. These activities were a noteworthy for their involvement and advocacy within the communities where members resided after graduation. A majority of LCSO former members in the original study chose to reside in their hometown communities after college graduation. This led the author to investigate the possible additional impacts of LCSO involvement on former members' preference to largely return back to where they started to expand these LCSO impact themes in their hometown communities.

Using similar qualitative phenomenological methods, a sample of LCSO members from the original study were re-interviewed to understand motivations for community and civic engagement, artistic activities, and community advocacy. To learn more about LCSO involvement impacts, Bordas' (2012) Multicultural Leadership Model is utilized to understand descriptions of leadership activities and community involvement by LCSO former members after college attendance. Phenomenological methods are appropriate for this additional study in that it continues to examine involvement and leadership from the accounts first gathered in the original study. In learning more from past experiences, this study provides additional contextual information to LCSO involvement impacts, focusing on culturally relevant factors found in the community engagement and activism of LCSO former members in the original study. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do LCSO former members describe reasons for involvement with community-based activities (e.g. churches, schools, non-profit organizations, national advocacy groups, and other activities) 20 years after college graduation?
2. How do LCSO former members define one key impact of LCSO involvement that is described in the original study – "give back to impact"?

Review of Literature

This section summarizes findings from the original study upon which this current study expands. The impact themes described by LCSO members 20 years after college attendance are provided to give an understanding of how LCSOs influenced career and educational goals. Studies investigating characteristics associated with participation in ethnic college student organizations are also summarized to provide an idea of how much membership affected the overall college experience. Research on the effects of Latina/o college student organizations is provided to give specific context to the current study.

Effects Associated with College Student Organizations

For over 30 years, studies on college student organization involvement have supported mostly positive outcomes of such activity (Mayhew, Rockenbach, Bowman, Seifert, & Wolniak, 2016). College student organization involvement has influenced affective outcomes such as sense of satisfaction with the college experience (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Branand, Mashek, Wray-Lake, 2015; Mayhew, et al., 2016; Webber, Krylow, & Zhang, 2013; Williams & Winston, Jr., 1985) and additional involvement with campus and community groups (Bowman, Park, & Denson, 2014; Davis, 1997; Williams & Winston, Jr., 1985). The intellectual development of college student organization members has been enhanced through increased interaction with their educational environment (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Reyes, 2015; Webber, Krylow & Zhang, 2013) and using academic support services to achieve educational goals (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Smith & Griffin, 1993; Torres, Reiser, LePeau, Davis, & Ruder, 2006).

Despite these positive research findings, earlier studies using college student organizations as a focus were often generalized and did not include the experiences found in cultural and ethnic student organizations (Mayhew, et al., 2016; Stage & Anaya, 1996). These gaps provided challenges in understanding how LCSO involvement influenced later participation in community advocacy and involvement (Mitchell et al., 2015; Bowman et al., 2014; Reyes, 2015). When studies on these organizations were emerging in the 1990's, the avoidance of recognizing the effects of these specific groups was "particularly problematic" since "predominantly and traditionally white student organizations such as fraternities, sororities, student government, religious groups, choir groups, and intramural groups" were primarily used to describe the involvement outcomes for all college students (Trevino, 1992, p.24). When this occurred, the unique contributions of ethnic college student organizations were not identified (Mayhew, et al., 2016; Montelongo, 2003; Stage & Anaya, 1996). Currently, improvement has been made in learning more about the specific experiences and outcomes associated with cultural and ethnic student organizations (Mitchell, Soria, Daniele, & Gipson, 2015). Mitchell and his associates state that student involvement research needs to be reframed to "acknowledge the importance of examining a greater range of involvement activities, programs, and opportunities" (p.5) diverse student populations tend participate in during college.

Long Term Impact of Latinx College Student Involvement

The literature on Latinx college student involvement impact beyond graduation is an area that continues to grow. In an examination of studies looking at outcomes associated with Latinx student organization, Montelongo et al. (2015) found that involvement in LSCOs promoted political activism to motivate social change and to further enhance ethnic and cultural identity development. Torres, Hernandez, & Martinez' (2019) Lifespan Model of Latinx Identity Development recognized the role LCSOs have on creating social change and developing identity.

In their model, involvement with cultural clubs and organizations impacted Latinx student identity by providing dissonance and meaning-making experiences. These experiences were part of a life-long process of identity development which could be returned in order to reevaluate how identity is socially constructed and adapted in different environments (Torres et al., 2019).

LCSOs and community involvement played a particularly crucial role in Latinx leadership development (Davis, 1997). Bowman, Park, and Denson (2015) investigated the effects of ethnic college student organization involvement on civic outcomes six years after graduation. While their study offered long-term effects of ethnic college student organization involvement, the selection of six years after graduation provided a partial window into long-term outcomes of college student involvement. An argument could be made that career, educational, and personal decisions were still in process, suggesting that outcomes have yet reached full fruition. Involvement in LCSOs maintained connections to communities familiar to Latinx college students (Montelongo et al., 2015; Fajardo, 2015; Hernandez, 2002). These connections were characterized by community service, political activism, and advocacy for a variety of social concerns (Davis, 1997; Delgado-Romero, Hernandez, & Montero, 2004; Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Davis (1997) provided an early account of Latinx college student leadership. Latinx student leaders were described as participating in “campaigns, protests, and service efforts” to improve community conditions. Involvement in “community-based organizations” (e.g., churches, schools, non-profit organizations, national advocacy groups) was usually characteristic of these student leaders, which LCSOs frequently supported in their efforts (Davis, 1997, p. 230).

In the original study previous to this current one, the author was able to describe four central themes associated with the long-term effects of Latina/o student organization involvement: Responsibility, Confidence, *La Familia*/Reconnection, and Cultural Advocacy (Montelongo, 2017). The themes reflected long-term effects associated with Latinx student organizations. The former members described how their LCSO involvement instilled within them a responsibility to continue promoting cultural awareness and educational support to family members and friends. The author stated that LCSO former members being responsible for “promoting these goals within the larger community suggested that the Latina/o student organization shaped citizens who were keen in the importance of giving back to the community” (Montelongo, 2017, Findings section, para. 2). Confidence was also described by former members as a long-term impact of LCSO involvement. Skills to face workplace challenges, to deal with being the only Latinx in higher level administration, and to deal with microaggressions and overt discrimination were said to be gained from LCSO involvement. LCSOs were also pivotal in creating strong social bonds for members. These bonds formed by LCSO members during college developed into familial-type relationships that were still in place well after graduation. Lastly, cultural advocacy reflected how the cultural identity of former LCSO members carried over into their careers, family, and other responsibilities. Key to this theme was the continued support, promotion, and recruitment of LCSOs within the community and educational settings.

Conceptual Framework

LCSOs in this study were defined as any student or administratively sponsored groups established for representing Latinx interests and culture in a particular area (Montelongo, 2003). Bordas’ (2012) Multicultural Leadership Model was used as a conceptual framework towards understanding the the long-term effects of involvement in college student organizations and the motivations for community involvement and advocacy practiced by former student organizational members. The model was developed as a counter-response to viewing leadership as an individual

process that uses a cultural orientation largely centered from a White male perspective. Bordas' model recognized a "multicultural leadership orientation" that "incorporates many cultural perspectives, appreciates differences, values unique contributions of diverse groups, and promotes learning from many orientations" (p. 8). Multicultural leadership reflected nine principles that use cultural values apparent within Native American, African American, and Latinx communities: Learning from the past; collective identity; a spirit of generosity; community-conferred leadership; tradition of activism; working for a common good; intergenerational leadership; *la familia*; and gratitude. These nine principles were grouped under three areas that help multicultural leadership thrive and endure, provide roles and functions, and support community growth and development (Bordas, 2012). The model assisted in the development of themes describing the motivation and involvement of former LCSO members within their communities after their college attendance.

Researcher Positionality

My own personal involvement in LCSOs as an undergraduate and graduate student is important to disclose for this study. My involvement in LCSOs impacted my identity development to the point where I became a "born again Chicano" (Trevino, 1992, p. 131). Opportunities to express my cultural heritage at the predominantly-White institutions (PWIs) allowed me to understand my place within these college environments. Through these organizations, I felt a responsibility to advocate and study Latinx college student experiences. My experiences with LCSOs as a college student shaped how I approach my role as a higher education administrator, faculty member, researcher and activist for marginalized populations within our society. Providing this positionality statement clarifies the potential bias that I may bring into the study (Creswell, 2014). While my own experiences in LCSOs have been my important part of my identity development, I used reflexivity journaling to document my interpretation of statements made by the study's participants are shaped by my interactions with these groups and my transitions within my own Latinx identity development (Torres et al., 2019). Completing a reflexivity journal was part of the data collection procedures to keep in check these potential biases to make sure that the study uses only the experiences of participants.

Methods

This follow-up study utilized a qualitative research design. Qualitative methods allowed the construction of critical narratives by participants on their college experiences (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Qualitative methods are appropriate when the researcher wants to inquire about the meaning individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). A social constructivist lens was also implemented to allow former LCSO members to develop their own meanings of LCSO experiences (Padilla-Diaz, 2015; Tillman, 2006). Phenomenological methods allowed the researcher to describe "the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants" (p. 14). Narratives from the study's participants were analyzed for significant statements to create "the generation of meaning units" that described the long-term impact of LCSO involvement. The research study's goal was to use these accounts of LCSO involvement to understand how "historical and cultural norms that operate[d] in individuals' lives" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8) impacted how they eventually interacted with their community.

Participant Selection

For this follow up study, participants from the original study were used for interviews on LCSO involvement impacts. In the original study, these participants were purposefully selected

for their wide range of collegiate involvement and their capacity to provide in-depth reflections needed for the research questions (Creswell, 2014). For the current study, convenience sampling procedures was used to select participants. Convenience sampling procedures provided the most preferred selection method due to using the sample at hand from the original study. Original study participants used in this current study's selection were members of a large umbrella-type LCSO between the years 1988-1992 at a 4-year public flagship university located in Texas.

Ten individuals were interviewed in the original study. All participants were contacted again for follow-up interviews for this current study. Original study participants were invited to expand further their reflections of their LCSO involvement. These former members were involved in a LCSO that was established at the university in the mid-1970's. The organization still is present on campus providing Latinx programming for students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. Student enrollment at the time participants attended the university was between 39,000 to 41,000 students with a Latinx representing approximately 6% of the total student body.

This invitation for continued study participation yielded six participants for interviews in the follow-up study. The extent of organization involvement varied for each of these former members in the current study, ranging from general membership to serving as executive officers in the group as undergraduates. Three female and three males participated in the follow-up interviews. Five participants identified their ethnicity as "Hispanic". Participants were asked to mark their preferred identifier for their cultural background. Out of the four choices provided – "Mexican-American", "Puerto Rican", "Cuban", "Other Hispanic or Latino (specify)" – all marked "Mexican-American.". The age range of participants was between 46 and 50 years old, with an average age of 46.7 years. Three current participants identified as being a first-generation undergraduate student. A summary of this information can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Gender, Cultural Background, Age and First-Generation College Student Status

Participant Pseudonym	Gender Identity	Ethnic/Racial Identity	Latina/o Background	Age	College Generational Status
Consuelo	Female	Hispanic	Mex-Am	46	Second
David	Male	Latino	Mex-Am	46	First
Johnny	Male	Hispanic	Mex-Am	50	First
Lobo	Male	Hispanic	Mex-Am	46	Second
Rae	Female	Hispanic	Mex-Am	46	Second
Sofia	Female	Hispanic	Mex-Am	46	First

Participants all received their bachelor's degrees. One received a master's degree and one earned a professional degree. Notably, 3 participants established careers in public service. All participants worked in the state of Texas. A summary of the education levels and careers of the participants can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Highest Level of Education & Current Professional Position

Name	Education Level	Current Professional Position
Consuelo	Professional	Chief Academic Officer, Large Urban School District in South Texas
David	Masters	Director, Title V Grants, Community College in South Texas (HSI)
Johnny	Bachelors	Administrative, Law Office
Lobo	Bachelors	I.T. Database Analyst
Rae	Bachelors	Operations Manager
Sofia	Bachelors	Health Care, Physician Practice Administrator

Data Collection

Data was collected through individual phone interviews lasting 45-60 minutes in length. Interviews used an IRB-approved structured interview protocol consisting of 6 open-ended questions that were connected to the LCSO impact themes developed from the original study. Interviews also included additional inquiry asking participants to describe their definition of “giving back to impact” in relation to any community involvement and advocacy activities. Culturally sensitive methods explained by Tillman (2002) were used in data collection. The researcher employed an approach which allowed participants “to articulate their own theories based on their particular circumstances and experiences” (Tillman, 2002, p. 281). The researcher captured a culturally sensitive “holistic contextualized picture” of an experience (Tillman, 2002, p. 269). Knowledge collected from participants was constructed based on how they experienced and interacted with the LSCO. Participants were also invited to add any additional comments on the concept of reconsidering what it means to be involved in an LCSO.

Data Analysis

All interviews were recorded and transcribed for the study. All participants for the study had an opportunity to review transcripts. The researcher completed a general analysis of data by creating initial coding categories. The initial coding was then analyzed to create emergent themes resulting from relationships found within all text contained within the specific codes (Creswell, 2014). The emergent themes were formed from an additional review of transcripts. Open coding further categorized the interviews into several prominent themes describing motivation and reasons for community involvement resulting from involvement in the LCSO. These final categories used *in vivo* terminology involvement in the words of the participants (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the researcher used a reflexivity journal to document thoughts and possible biases to improve the validity of data. These reflections provided reference in future data interpretation. Performing such a task helped in understanding how interpretation of data could possibly be influenced by the background and culture of the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

Limitations

The study is limited in its generalizability to the experiences of other former members of LCSO's from other institutions. This study used a sample whose collegiate experiences occurred at a large, public 4-year PWI and current experiences within their hometowns and regions nearby. Descriptions of long-term effects of other former LCSO members residing in locations other than their home region and other parts of the country may provide different contexts in which their involvement occurred. Findings may not generalize also to Latinx students who had little or no involvement with LCSO's or student life. Thus, careful consideration is advised in stating the findings as reflective of all Latinx college students.

Findings

Beyond Career and Educational Goals

The original study focused on the effects LCSO involvement had on former members' career, educational, and personal aspirations. Upon completion of interviews with these former members, data revealed that many of the original study's participants were involved in pursuits outside of their chosen careers. The former members of the LCSO used in the initial study were notably active in community service, civic responsibilities, and cultural arts. A summary of these interests is provided in Table 3.

Table 3:

Participant Leadership & Impact

Name	Organization Leadership	Impact
Consuelo	Principal	Community education leader
David	Founding executive board member, national Latino education organization; Vice-President, education foundation	School board member advocating for at-risk students; Alternative music aficionado (stated that this broke Latino stereotypes)
Johnny	Immigration legal aide	Playwright; Supporter of fine arts; Latinx community activist
Lobo	Webmaster	Author of Latinx-focused young adult novels; Bilingual/ESL school volunteer
Rae	Board member, Alzheimer's Association	Caretaker - parent w/Alzheimer's; Church youth group director; Cub Scout pack leader
Sofia	Board of Directors, Dress for Success	Career mentor for unemployed women; Church youth group volunteer

While formers members of the LCSO achieved, for the most part, their desired career goals, they supplemented their success with a variety of involvement in their communities. LCSO former members participating in this study found a variety of ways to “give back to impact” in their communities. Community involvement and engagement took the form of serving as an educational advocate (Consuelo and David), career mentor and role model for Latinas (Sofia),

community health supporter (Rae), and creative writers (Johnny and Lobo). These LCSO former members also used their careers to provide multicultural leadership within their work organizations, by serving on professional association boards, reaching executive administration levels, or volunteering for community agencies. At least for these former LCSO members, not only did they find success in their educational and career pursuits, but they also included an element of giving back to their communities in a variety of impactful and creative ways.

Motivation for Community Advocacy and Involvement

Using the conceptual framework of multicultural leadership (Bordas, 2012), this study revealed possible motivation and impact of LCSO former member involvement approximately 20 years after their college attendance. Interviews provided reflections on what it means to “give back to impact” once they settled into their careers and life as parents or family caretakers. The idea of “give back to impact” was stated by Lobo in the original study (Montelongo, 2017). Lobo believed that one of the primary purposes of LCSOs is to give back to Latinx communities in whatever way possible to help improve educational success:

I think that what I did back in college really helped me understand what it means to give back to the community. Give back to make an impact. I write on the side, I’ve had a book published, so I’ve done a lot of things like volunteer to speak in classrooms and donate books and just talk about writing to encourage kids in the area. They are primarily Hispanic. There is actually a Latino [community] organization that I’ve been involved with the last 2 years. I’ve been mentoring at local schools. So, that to me is the number one thing. Staying involved with the community, giving back and doing it to impact others to do the same.

In doing so, he believed that this would cause a ripple effect for additional Latinx community involvement. From the LCSO former members in this study, 3 major themes regarding reasons why they got involved with community, civic, and artistic activities emerged after analyses: Generosity; Legacy; and Passion. Participants also provided a structural definition of what it means for LCSOs to “give back to impact.” The components of this definition will be outlined in this section.

Generosity. Former LCSO members reflected on the driving motivation for their outside activities which involved their community. In describing their community involvement, LCSO former members often mentioned offering mentoring to community members, especially to the next generation of Latinx learners. Former members also described how they made efforts to provide support for Latinx community members by sharing their own stories of successes and struggles in their educational and career journeys. By sharing their own stories, they gave messages to others that they too could find the same levels of success. In doing all of these efforts, LCSO former members felt they were creating a stronger Latinx community capable of reaching high aspiration levels. An element of generosity, where former members shared the effects of their past LCSO involvement to community members, was apparent in their community activities.

This idea of reaching the highest levels of success was expressed by Lobo, who intentionally visited predominantly-Latinx elementary schools in his area to provide book readings of his young adult novels, which notably included Latinx main characters. Lobo felt a sense of pride when he did these readings at schools because when he did, “the kids light up.” When he reads to the children, Lobo believed their excitement came about by seeing him as a Latino role model:

They're thinking 'I never thought someone that looks like me could ever be a book author!' I try to inspire the students when I visit schools. I do my best to inspire.

It's my passion when I promote my books in the community.

At book readings and book fairs, Lobo makes sure to tell young children that “[book authors] are just like you”, using his writing involvement as a way to encourage young Latino children to think creatively and to write for fun.

Being generous in supporting adult career aspirations were described by Sophia, who served as a role model for Latina women who were reentering the workforce. In her volunteer work for Dress for Success, Sophia found an outlet to share skills she directly attributed to her LCSO involvement, in particular how to carry yourself with confidence and the value of mentorship. Sophia stated by working with Dress for Success:

I am able to mentor women in order to catapult them to new adventures in careers.

I find great strength in helping women reenter the workforce, in South Texas we had very high female employment rates. I was very active in helping those women get back to work.

She uses her community involvement to make sure the women know “they are not alone and they too can find success and learn from how I carried myself in my career.” Sophia believed that by being involved with this group to empower women in their careers, “I can share hope.”

Legacy. Former LCSO members also stated that their community involvement was, in some way, their legacy in creating the next generation of Latinx community leaders. This idea was largely expressed by supporting and encouraging Latinx youth activism and cultivating Latinx college student leadership by promoting involvement in current LCSOs on campus. This promotion of college student leadership was largely expressed to immediate and extended family members, as well to general community members through their roles in civic and volunteer agencies. By continuing to be involved in these agencies, former members felt that they were continuing an important purpose of their LCSO, which was community advocacy. These characteristics reflected the idea that LCSO involvement was not just something that was just limited to the college years, it was a legacy of impactful leadership, which actually started for some well before their college attendance.

David mentioned that his Latino leadership actually started prior to college. Involvement in a LCSO was “a natural progression” for him and his friends from his hometown, which had a history of Latinx community activism:

For me, community outreach actually started with my childhood friends in high school and that it only grew stronger in college thanks to being involved in [the LCSO]. Despite being in what some would consider a small town, we all were interested in current events and such.

Once David and his friends graduated from college, they continued the legacy of being Latinx community activists by working in schools or becoming elected officials near their hometown.

Our high school has a legacy of advocacy. I try to tell others to be more impactful in what you do and to try to create change in [name of hometown]. If you do, it's just the beginning.

For David, his service in a national Latinx education association and on the local school board reflected his community leadership background prior to college. David continues to support youth activism by encouraging at-risk students to voice their demands to the local school board, supported by his role on the board.

Consuelo in her role as a principal and community education leader strived to give her students the tools needed to be effective student leaders:

I honestly can state that I learned the value of leadership from [the LCSO] and was able to share the skills sets needed for leadership to the students I currently advise and teach. It's all connected to my work, you know being a high school principal has great responsibility to students.

Her comments reflect both the legacy of her LCSO involvement and how her students will benefit from her guidance through her mentorship. In her K-12 school setting, the next generation of college student leaders and community activists were advised through her interest in using her career role beyond teaching and administration.

Lastly, legacy quite literally meant that the LCSO former members had college-going children who themselves were finding their leadership niche thanks to the encouragement of their parents, who once were student leaders in LCSOs. Lobo believed that today's Latinx students "have come a long way where there are more choices of organizations for them to join and become leaders." He encouraged his son to get involved in groups that would help him advance in his professional career. Lobo expressed pride when describing this son's college leadership:

My son just jumped right in and did it! Can I tell you how proud I am to let you know my son is the first president of [institution name] mock trial team? He's working to make a difference. I told my son to do something that will give back to the community.

By being on the mock trial team, Lobo hoped his son will attend law school to eventually work to represent the Latinx community.

Passion. All LCSO former members in this study described a driving motivation for their community involvement. Despite all participants working full-time in extremely busy careers and caring for family members, they felt community and artistic involvement helped them focused on self-care and balanced their professional work life. Johnny found his outlet by writing plays depicting the lives of the Latinx populace. When asked why he writes plays, Johnny stated:

Because theatre is very involved in the local community, very involved in activism so, that is the context. Nothing is more satisfying than engaging in playwriting. I am reigniting my writing because my focus, my passion, obviously is to address social issues on the stage.

Although working in the area of immigration law, Johnny believed his voice could be better heard on the stage. Johnny's recent work is a short play depicting the lives of immigrants from Central America that will be presented on a college campus. Johnny said that putting the play on a campus is important because "I want to change the behavior of students and how they and others view Latinos. It is my deep passion. It's why I write."

The passion of changing perceptions of Latinx in the community is engrained in all activities carried out by the LCSO former members. In some ways, this is done through music preferences. David described how his music passion makes him unique within the Latinx community:

I frequently listen to music that is labeled "post-punk, Gothic New Wave." I am a what you would call New Wave aficionado and I attend live concerts (in the genre) whenever I can. [Laughs] I definitely stick out in the crowd. I get teased often for not favoring Mexican music. I don't care. It's my music of choice.

In a similar characteristic, Lobo plays for an Eighties cover band and mentioned in his interview that they recently started touring. David and Lobo both expressed their passion for music as a way

to break down Latinx stereotypes and to face fear and intimidation head on. For Lobo, the fear factor was represented in knowledge that his band will soon be playing in larger venues. For David, the fear is being chastised members in his own community. Interestingly, both described these passions as being aided by the confidence gained from their LCSO involvement. Despite doing activities that may provide negative responses or rejection from the community, they use what they learned from the LCSO to move onward and to continue doing what they love.

“Give Back to Impact” Defined

Using the information provided by interviews from LCSO former members in this study, a structural definition of community involvement was created to give context to an important characteristic of LCSOs – “give back to impact.” The definition outlines four key areas describing the motivations for LCSO involvement, based on former members: creating positive change; making sure that the work keeps going; working to make a difference; and community improvement.

Positive change. One main quality that came from community involvement described by LCSO former members was being a conduit for positive change in the community. Giving back entailed sharing skill sets and education for the good of others. Counselo used her position in education to improve learning not only for her school, but for her overall community by becoming education activist. Her work inspired others and directly connected this outcome to “the value of leadership in the [LCSO]” which she participated as an undergraduate. LCSO former members used their community, civic, and artistic activities to motivate and uplift other Latinx individuals, especially among youth and young adults who are the future leaders. Lobo provided an excellent example of how his artistic pursuits as an author are used to make Latinx children consider the arts as an outlet for cultural expression. For the most part, LCSO formers in this study gave back to the community with the goal to do good for others.

“It’s not what you do, it’s how you do it.” The current study interviewed LCSO former members 20 years after college graduation to reflect on how their college involvement impacted their achievements and activities currently. Former members continued to advance one purpose of the LCSO, which was to connect to the community. Even after 20 years, LCSO former members found themselves advancing this characteristic in their current activities. However, these members pointed out that this continued community involvement was part of their goals to make meaningful impact in their work. David mentioned that once you became involved, “it’s not what you do, it’s how you do it.” When asked to explain what this meant, he stated “changes that occur [from community involvement] are just the beginning. You have to keep following through.” David expanded the idea of giving back to the community by adding the element that once you are connected, “you need to stay committed to your service.” This is especially true for those who received the service work of these LCSO former members. Rae believed that giving back and staying committed provided opportunities “to influence someone so that they, too, could do something they thought they couldn’t.” In order to maximize this influence, LCSO former members appeared to hold high levels of follow through and commitment in their community involvement.

Work that makes a difference. LCSO former members believed their community, civic, and artistic involvement made a difference in the community and for Latinx youth and current college students. This involvement largely was done to further inspire these individuals to do more and to reach higher in their aspirations. Consuelo, Lobo, and Sophia all highlighted how their community involvement was used to uplift others who may find it hard to locate Latinx advocates

for their specific needs and issues. By becoming leaders in their careers and using the leadership skills gained from their LCSO involvement, former members found themselves becoming examples of achievement that is possible when staying committed to personal and educational goals.

One interesting characteristic noted by LCSO former members to make sure community work made a difference was that it needed to be interactive. David, Lobo, Rae, and Sophia all described the interactive nature of community involvement: it is hands-on and involves engaging with others. David found himself becoming a leader within a Latinx education professional organization, which he felt “made me more impactful in what I do for Latino education.” Lobo felt that he was “always learning and teaching” in his role as a young adult novel author. Despite his full-time career as an I.T. administrator, Lobo enjoyed “inspiring students and interacting with kids to promote artistic involvement” so that kids “say ‘hey, he looks just like me. I can also do what he does.’”

Community improvement. The last characteristic of giving back to impact was overall community improvement. Based on the responses of LCSO former members, improvement was reflected in activities that promoted economic advancement, social justice advocacy, education improvements, and cultural arts expression. Sophia’s work with Dress for Success, a non-profit agency aimed at empowering women in their careers, provided support for Latinas to gain economic independence. Johnny’s work as an aspiring playwright used the arts as a mechanism to further educate the broader community on issues specific for the Latinx community. Consuelo and David both used their roles in K-12 and higher education to advance policies and initiatives aimed to improve student success at their respective campuses. All LCSO former members in this current study used community involvement as means towards working for social justice in the community. All mentioned that their community service was not for primarily self-serving gains, but for the overall improvement of Latinx communities in the workforce, education, and the arts. These LCSO members found themselves in roles that they felt could allow them to make an impact. Similar to how they viewed their LCSO involvement making an impact on their educational and career aspirations 20 years after graduation (Montelongo, 2017), this study found the same involvement making an impact on community improvement.

Discussion

This continuation of an original study examining the impact of LCSO involvement on former members focused on their engagement in community 20 years after graduation. Former LCSO members found opportunities to provide advocacy and support for their Latinx communities outside their career and educational roles. For this study, former members were involved in a variety of activities which continued to support community efforts, instill student success, and promoted cultural arts. In their community involvement, former members still relied on the leadership skills and values they gained from being involved in the LCSO while they were in college. Giving back to the community was largely a reflection of the impact the LCSO had on the former members’ views of service, activism, and success.

Bordas’ (1993) Multicultural Leadership Model provides a helpful lens to see how former members describe their community involvement. The themes describing motivation for community advocacy and involvement align with principles found in multicultural leadership. Characteristics of the community involvement of LCSO former members align with the principles described by Bordas. Generosity, collectivism, activism, supporting community growth, and intergenerational leadership were highlighted in this current study. Further investigations are

needed to fully understand the lasting impacts of college involvement. In addition, this current study also allows a reconsideration on why students become involved in LCSOs. Using Bordas' multicultural leadership model, involvement might not be for self-serving purposes for Latinx, but mainly for a common good.

Several recommendations for leadership providers, community agencies, and educational administrators are provided from this continuation of a study on LCSO impacts on former members 20 years after college attendance. More studies are needed to look beyond immediate student outcomes from college student involvement in order to understand how former members reflected on their past involvement. The current study could provide a glimpse into growing area of college student involvement research looking at culturally responsive involvement opportunities in higher education (Mitchell et al., 2015). The study could initiate further questions that could be investigated looking at the distinct college involvement characteristics found among diverse student populations. Educators could benefit from talking to alumni who participated in LCSOs to see if this involvement influenced engagement outside of their career roles. Interviewing LCSO former members who resided in areas outside their hometowns or other states is also needed for further analysis on their community engagement and advocacy. Investigations to see if the level of engagement and advocacy carried over to other areas would be beneficial.

Conclusion

This current study echoed Davis' (1997) earlier writings on Latinx leadership development found in LCSOs. In that article, Davis believed that LCSOs provided "a rich legacy of activism, community service, advocacy, and naturally, leadership development" (p. 231). A community connection has been a key characteristic of LCSOs from the 1990s as stated by Davis, going back into the late 1800s with the first fraternal organizations (Fajardo, 2015), to current times where LCSO former members in this study encouraged participation by Latinx youth and college students in community, civic, and artistic activities. Investigations on Latinx college student organizations and their impact needs to be understood. Immediate outcomes soon after college do not provide a complete picture of the importance of LCSOs. Involvement outcomes need to be re-evaluated for diverse student populations. Educational leaders and researchers need to understand culturally relevant factors stemming from student involvement patterns of diverse students. Outcome measures need to reflect the collectivist nature of multicultural leadership described by Bordas (1993) that is apparent among LCSO former members in this follow-up study. Educational leaders and researchers would also benefit in learning from the experiences of Latinx college alumni. Their experiences are key resources in building constructs to understand and reframe involvement and leadership measures. Former LCSO members attested that even 20 years after college attendance, community involvement is a key aspect of the leadership gained from the organization and "giving back to impact" continues to be a long-lasting legacy of LCSOs.

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